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Terrorism

An Introduction

THIRD EDITION

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Mutating Forms
of Terrorism

You have probably heard and may have used the word *terrorism* prior to reading this book. If you have, then you had an image in your mind when you discussed it. Other people have used the word, and they also project their own meanings into the term *terrorism*. This creates a problem. Nobody has been able to produce an exact definition of the subject. As a result, terrorism means different things to different people. To make matters worse, the nature of terrorism has changed over the course of history. Violent activity at one point in time may be called terrorism, while the same action may be deemed war, liberation, or crime in another period of history. Religion has come to play an important part of some forms of terrorism in the past few years. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce methods for understanding terrorism and the tactics terrorists use.

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Describe the problems of the contextual meaning of terrorism.
2. List and define some of the contexts of terrorism.
3. List and summarize some common definitions of terrorism.
4. Explain the strengths and weaknesses of typologies of terrorism.
5. Describe a tactical typology of terrorism.
6. List and summarize the five basic tactical forms of terrorism.

THE CONTEXT OF TERRORISM

Terrorism beams into our homes through television screens, it assaults us in newspapers and magazines, and it sometimes touches our lives in more direct manners. People do not seem to worry about the definition of terrorism at such times. They simply feel terror when they see the violence. Sometimes it seems as though the event itself defines terrorism. For example, when a plane is destroyed by a bomb, it is frequently called *terrorism,* but when military forces shoot down a civilian aircraft, it can be deemed an unfortunate mistake. The United States may launch missiles at a suspected terrorist base and claim it is defending national interests. Yet, it may condemn another country for doing the same thing in another part of the world. Dual standards and contradictions lead to confusion any time the term *terrorism* is employed.

The term *terrorism* has spawned heated debate. Instead of agreeing on the definition of terrorism, social scientists, policymakers, lawyers, and security specialists often argue about the meaning of the term. H. H. A. Cooper (1978, 2001), a renowned terrorist expert from the University of Texas at Dallas, aptly summarizes the problem. There is, Cooper says, "a problem in the problem definition." We can agree that terrorism is a problem, but we cannot agree on what terrorism is.

There are several reasons for confusion. First, terrorism is difficult to define because it has a pejorative connotation. (Pejorative means that it is emotionally charged.) A person is politically and socially degraded when labeled a terrorist, and the same thing happens when an organization is called a terrorist group. Routine crimes assume greater social importance when they are described as terrorism, and political movements can be hampered when their followers are believed to be terrorists.

Further confusion arises when people intertwine the terms *terror* and *terrorism.* The object of military force, for example, is to strike terror into the heart of the enemy, and systematic terror has been a basic weapon in conflicts throughout history. Some people argue that there is no difference between military force and terrorism. Many members of the antinuclear movement have extended this argument by claiming that maintaining ready-to-use nuclear weapons is an extension of terrorism. Others use the same logic when claiming that street gangs and criminals terrorize neighborhoods. If you think that anything that creates terror is terrorism, the scope of potential definitions becomes limitless.

One of the primary reasons terrorism is difficult to define is that the meaning changes within social and historical contexts. This is not to suggest that "one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter," but it does suggest the meaning fluctuates. Change in the meaning occurs because terrorism is not a solid entity. Like crime, it is socially defined, and the meaning changes with social change.

This chapter examines some common definitions of terrorism. These definitions are worth reviewing, but it is more important to understand that

definitions of terrorism are not very helpful. You need to understand the context of the definition before applying the term. The definition of terrorism always changes with social and historical circumstances. As a result, terrorism presents a problem. Akin to the Supreme Court's definition of pornography, we do not know how to define terrorism, but we know what it is when we see it. It seems that H. H. A. Cooper is indeed correct. We have a problem in the problem definition.

Some Common Contexts of Terrorism

Before reviewing definitions of terrorism, it is helpful to examine the meaning of terrorism within specific frameworks. It is more helpful to list the context of terrorism than to memorize a variety of definitions. The following are some contextual issues to consider.

History The meaning of terrorism has changed over time. It is almost impossible to talk about terrorism without discussing the historical context of the terrorist campaign. This is so important that the second part of the text is designed to familiarize you with historical developments in world history.

Modern terrorism originated from the French Revolution (1789–1795). It was used as a term to describe the actions of the French government. By 1848, the meaning of the term changed. It was employed to describe violent revolutionaries who revolted against governments. By the end of the 1800s and early 1900s, terrorism was used to describe the violent activities of a number of groups including: labor organizations, anarchists, nationalist groups revolting against foreign powers, and ultranationalist political organizations.

After World War II (1939–1945), the meaning changed again. As people revolted from European domination of the world, nationalistic groups were deemed to be terrorist groups. From about 1964 to the early 1980s, the term *terrorism* was also applied to violent left-wing groups, as well as nationalists. In the mid-1980s, the meaning changed again. In the United States, some of the violent activity of the hate movement was defined as terrorism. Internationally, terrorism was viewed as subnational warfare. Terrorists were sponsored by rogue regimes.

As the millennium changed, the definitions of terrorism also changed. Today terrorism also refers to large groups who are independent from a state, violent religious fanatics, and violent groups who terrorize for a particular cause such as the environment. It is important to realize that any definition is influenced by the historical context of terrorism.

Conflict The meaning of terrorism fluctuates around various types of war. In times of conventional war, armies use commando tactics that look very much like terrorism. In the American Civil War, the Federal Army unleashed Major John Anderson to destroy Confederate railroads. The Confederates captured Anderson and accused him of being a spy, but he remained a hero in the North. He did not wear a uniform, and he did not fight by the accepted norm.

Armies routinely use such tactics in times of war and never define their actions as terrorism.

In guerrilla war, guerrillas use terrorist tactics against their enemies and may terrorize their supporters into submission. In total war, air forces may destroy entire cities with fire. The German Air Force (*Luftwaffe*) did so at Stalingrad in 1942, and the British and American Air Forces did the same at Dresden in 1945. Neither side believed it was practicing terrorism. While it is possible to cite many other examples and endless contradictions, you should realize that the definition of terrorism changes with the nature of conflict. The term *terrorism* is more likely to be employed to describe violent activity that explodes during a peaceful period.

Political Power The definition of terrorism depends on political power. Governments can increase their power when they label opponents as "terrorists." Citizens seem willing to accept more abuses of governmental power when a counterterrorist campaign is in progress. "Terrorists" do not enjoy the same humanitarian privileges as "people." In the public mind, illegal arrest and sometimes even torture and murder are acceptable methods for dealing with terrorists. Labeling can have deadly results.

Repression Closely related to the issue of power is the concept of repression. Some governments routinely use terrorism to keep their citizens in line. Such repression can sometimes be seen in the political structure of the country as leaders use secret police forces to maintain power. Joseph Stalin (1879–1953) ruled the Soviet Union from 1924 to 1953 through terror, and Saddam Hussein rules Iraq by similar methods. Latin America has witnessed several rulers who maintain power through repression, many times with help from the United States. Repression can also develop outside formal political structures. This is called *extrajuridical* repression. It refers to repressive groups who terrorize others into certain forms of behavior. Political repression is a form of terrorism, but people seldom refer to this form of violence when defining terrorism.

Media Journalists and television reporters frequently use the term *terrorism* to define political violence. However, there is no consistent standard guiding them in the application of the definition. Many times they employ the term to attract attention to a story. Terrorism, when defined by the media, is relatively meaningless.

Crime You might think that criminals and terrorists represent two different types of violent behavior. Some analysts would agree, but confusion remains. A few years ago, a Presidential Commission on criminal justice stated that it was necessary to look at the motivation of a criminal act to determine whether it was a terrorist action (National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, 1976). When a crime is politically motivated, the report says it is terrorism. The problem with this approach is that a crime is a crime

no matter what motivation lies behind the action. Except in times of conflict or government repression, all terrorism involves criminal activity. Even in the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation does not file most political crimes under the heading of terrorism in its *Uniform Crime Reports.*

Religion In recent years, religion has played a more significant role in the process of terrorism. This is fully examined in Chapter 4, but it is important to understand that extreme religious beliefs provide a context for defining terrorism. Religious violence centers around three sources (White, 2000). First, some religious groups feel they must purify the world for a new epoch. This can be defined as *violent eschatology.* Second, some groups feel they are chosen and may destroy other people in the cause of righteousness. This type of attitude can lead to violent intolerance and religious war. Finally, other people may become so consumed with a particular cause that they create a surrogate religion and take violent action to advance their beliefs. Ecological terrorists serve as an example of this type of pseudoreligious terrorism.

Specific Forms Sometimes the term *terrorism* is defined within a specific context. A detailed look at weapons of mass destruction is presented later in this book under the heading of *technological terrorism.* Another specific form of terrorism refers to computer attacks, viruses, or destruction of an information infrastructure. This is called *cyberterrorism.* Finally, drug organizations frequently use terrorist tactics, and some terrorist organizations sell drugs to support their political activities. Some analysts use the term *narcoterrorism* to describe this type of violence. Retired FBI counterterrorist specialist William Dyson (2000, in press) argues these issues are not separate forms of terrorism. Rather, they are modes of attack used by political terrorists.

Changing Contexts

Can you think of other contextual factors that influence the definition of terrorism? The list is probably endless. Regardless, it is enough to be aware that the definition of terrorism changes with political and social contexts. Terrorist analyst Alex Schmid (1983) says no matter how we define terrorism, the definition will always fluctuate because the context of violent activity changes. We cannot define terrorism. With that weakness in mind, it is time to look at some of the more popular definitions.

SOME COMMON DEFINITIONS

The most widely used definition in criminal justice, military, and security circles is a rather simple view fostered by Brian Jenkins, a widely known counterterrorist security specialist, and Walter Laqueur, another leading authority from Georgetown University. They defined terrorism separately but arrived at remarkably similar conclusions.

Jenkins offers a definition he has frequently used while consulting with security forces. Jenkins (1984) calls terrorism the use or threatened use of force designed to bring about a political change. In a definition closely related to that of Jenkins, Laqueur (1987, p. 72) says terrorism constitutes the illegitimate use of force to achieve a political objective by targeting innocent people. He adds that attempts to move beyond the simple definition are fruitless because the term is so controversial. Volumes can be written on the definition of terrorism, Laqueur writes in a footnote, but they will not add one iota to our understanding of the topic. In a later work, Laqueur (1999, pp. 8–10) promotes a simple definition, only arguing that meanings and definitions fluctuate with history.

Both Jenkins and Laqueur freely admit problems with their simple approach. Neither definition limits the topic, and there is no meaningful way to apply a simple definition to specific acts of terrorism. Simple definitions also leave academicians, policymakers, and social scientists frustrated. In short, simplicity does not solve the problem presented by Professor Cooper.

Yet, Laqueur intimates, it is necessary to live with the problems and weaknesses of the simple definition because terrorism will always mean different things to different people. With this in mind, examine the positions of Laqueur and Jenkins. From a security perspective, Laqueur's conclusion makes sense: terrorism is a form of political or criminal violence using military tactics to change behavior through fear. This simple approach does not solve the political problems of definition, but it allows security personnel to move beyond endless debates. Anyone charged with counterterrorism is trying to prevent military-style criminal attacks against innocent people in a noncombat area.

But definitions hardly stop with pragmatic simplicity. Germany, the United Kingdom, and Spain outlawed terrorism more than a decade ago, and America has examined the idea of a legal definition (Mullendore & White, 1996). The beauty of legal definitions is they give governments specific crimes that can be used to take action against terrorist activities. Beyond that, they are quite useless because they account for neither the social nor the political nature of terrorism. More important, they can be misused. Violence is the result of complex social factors that range beyond narrow legal limitations and foreign policy restrictions. Political violence often occurs during the struggle for legitimacy. For example, American patriots fought the British before the United States government was recognized.

Legal definitions also contain internal contradictions. Under the legal guidelines of the United States, for example, *some groups can be labeled as terrorists, while other groups engaged in the same activities may be described as legitimate revolutionaries.* In addition, governments friendly to the United States in Latin America have committed some of the worst atrocities in the history of the world in the name of counterterrorism. Ironically, some Latin American revolutionaries who oppose our repressive friends espouse the rights expressed in the U.S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution, yet we refer to them as terrorists. Legal definitions are frequently shortsighted.

Martha Crenshaw (1983) says terrorism cannot be defined unless the act, target, and possibility of success are analyzed. Under this approach, freedom fighters use legitimate military methods to attack legitimate political targets. Their actions are further legitimized when they have some possibility of winning the conflict. Terrorists fail to meet the legitimacy test in one of the three categories: military methods, military targets, and some chance of victory.

Crenshaw also suggests revolutionary violence should not be confused with terrorism. To Crenshaw, terrorism means socially and politically unacceptable violence aimed at an innocent target to achieve a psychological effect. Such analytical distinctions have helped make Crenshaw a leading authority on terrorism, but two problems remain. Whoever has the political power to define "legitimacy" has the power to define terrorism. In addition, the analytical definition has not moved far from the simple definition.

During the Reagan administration (1981–1989), it became popular to define terrorism in terms of national policy. Analysts pointed to terrorist states that used terrorism to attack American interests. Neil Livingstone (Livingstone & Arnold, 1986, pp. 1–10) lists five powers that served as the former Soviet Union's client states. Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (1986, pp. 5–15) called the West to arms against the terrorist states. If you accept this logic, it solves the definitional dilemma. Terrorists were shadow warriors from Libya, Syria, Bulgaria, East Germany, and North Korea under the command of the former Soviet Union's Bureau of State Security (KGB).

However, the state-sponsored definition fell on hard times, even before the collapse of the Communist empire. James Adams (1986) thoroughly demonstrates that terrorist groups are not and never were controlled by sponsor states. Michael Stohl (1988, pp. 1–28) sounds another caveat. Some terrorist states did indeed offer logistical support and sympathy to terrorist groups, but their overall impact was insignificant. When the Soviet Union collapsed, the arguments of state sponsorship dwindled. Although some terrorists hiding in East Europe were arrested (the East Germans turned over names and addresses of the Red Army Faction to the new German federal police, for example), the nature of terrorism shifted in the last part of the twentieth century. Terrorism is too complex and too significant to be controlled by nation-states.

A different definition comes from Edward Herman (1983), who says terrorism should be defined in terms of state repression. Citing corrupt Latin American governments, Herman argues that repressive policies have resulted in more misery for more people than any other form of state-sponsored terror. In a separate publication, Michael Stohl (1988, pp. 20–28) sounds a sympathetic note, claiming terrorism is most frequently used by governments to maintain power. Walter Laqueur (1987, p. 6) says such conclusions are correct, and one would be foolish to deny that state repression has caused less suffering than modern terrorism. Yet, Laqueur argues, governmental repression is a long-term political problem, separate from modern terrorism. To include it in the discussion confuses the issue and does little to enhance our understanding of terrorism.

In an effort to solve the definitional dilemma, Alex Schmid (1983, pp. 70–111) tries to synthesize various positions. He concludes there is no true or correct definition because terrorism is an abstract concept with no real presence. A single definition cannot possibly account for all the potential uses of the term. Still, Schmid says, a number of elements are common to leading definitions, and most definitions have two characteristics: someone is terrorized, and the meaning of the term is derived from terrorists' targets and victims.

Schmid also offers a conglomerated definition of terrorism. His empirical analysis finds 22 elements common to most definitions, and he develops a definition containing 13 of those elements. Schmid sees terrorism as a method of combat in which the victims serve as symbolic targets. Violent actors are able to produce a chronic state of fear by using violence outside the realm of normative behavior. This produces an audience beyond the immediate victim and results in a change of public attitudes and actions.

Some scholars believe Schmid has solved the definitional dilemma by combining definitions. Others think he has refined the undefinable. While analysts wrestle with the problem, most end up doing one of three things. Some follow the lead of Crenshaw and Thomas Thorton (1964, p. 73) and look for illegitimate violence instead of political revolution. Others follow the lead of Schmid, either synthesizing definitions or using those of others. Finally, some people ignore the problem altogether. They talk about terrorism and assume everybody knows what they mean.

See Box 1.1 for a summary of the common definitions of terrorism and Box 1.2 for a list of some official definitions that are used.

TYPOLOGIES OF TERRORISM

A typology is a classification system, and there are as many typologies of terrorism as there are definitions. Models, classification systems, and typologies, however, offer an alternative to definitions, and they have several advantages. First, the broad scope of the problem can be presented. Terrorism is composed of a variety of activities, not a singly defined action. A typology captures the range of terrorist activities better than most definitions. Second, the scope of the problem allows the level of the problem to be introduced. Terrorism can be local, national, or international in occurrence. A typology helps identify what *kind* of terrorism is to be examined. Third, when the level of terrorism is identified, the level of response can be determined. Finally, by focusing on types of violence and the social meanings of tactics, typologies avoid the heated debates about the meaning of terrorism.

Typologies are not a panacea, and they do not solve all the definitional dilemmas. First, the process of terrorism is in a constant state of change. Models, taxonomies, and typologies only describe patterns among events. They are generalizations that describe extremely unstable environments. Typologies may increase our understanding of terrorism, but each terrorist incident must be understood in its specific social, historical, and political circumstances.

BOX 1.1   Definition of Terrorism

Jenkins and Laqueur: Illegitimate force used against innocents for political purposes

Livingstone: Warfare on the cheap

Crenshaw: Politically illegitimate attacks on innocent targets

Herman: Government repression

Schmid: Combat against symbolic targets

Another weakness of typologies involves the distortion of reality. After developing a model, some people, including scholars, try to fit particular forms of terrorism into it. They alter what they see so that it will blend with their typology. This has been especially true regarding Latin America. Governments, journalists, teachers, and revolutionaries have developed ideological typologies for Latin America and then bent reality to fit their political views. Changing events to fit a pattern can completely distort reality. When this happens, researchers only see what they want to see. In addition, typologies hide details. They produce patterns, not specifics, even when they are correctly applied.

Peter Fleming, Michael Stohl, and Alex Schmid (1988, pp. 153–195) criticize the use of typologies to describe terrorism, claiming they reflect the biases of the researchers. Typologies also tend to compare variables that should not be compared in different incidents. To be usable, these researchers believe, typologies must account for a group's political motivation, origin, scope of action, and the focus of its attention. Fleming, Stohl, and Schmid are critical of typologies because none of them has attempted to provide in-depth political analysis.

If you assume that Fleming, Stohl, and Schmid are correct, you may reject the use of typologies; however, they can have limited benefit. Although they do not solve the definitional problems or provide a method for examining deep-seated political and social issues, they can be useful in the more limited role of tactically identifying a security problem. Some noted authorities have approached terrorism in this manner.

TOWARD A TACTICAL TYPOLOGY
OF TERRORISM

Although this is not an optimistic thought, a simple assumption will help you understand terrorism. Humans live in a constant state of conflict. Indeed, it is impossible to have a human social organization without conflict. Even in the most peaceful community, social organization is maintained because the controlling group can force people to join the organization and force members to obey the organization's rules. The amount of force is subject to limitation, but

BOX 1.2 Official Definitions of Terrorism

Even governmental bodies have several definitions of terrorism.

State Department: Title 22 of the *United States Code* section 2656f(d) contains the following definitions: The term "terrorism" means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience. The term "international terrorism" means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country. The term "terrorist group" means any group practicing, or that has significant subgroups that practice, international terrorism.

SOURCE: *1999 Patterns of Terrorism.*

FBI: The FBI defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives." The FBI further describes terrorism as either domestic or international, depending on the origin, base, and objectives of the terrorist organization.

SOURCE: http://www.fbi.gov/publish/terror/terrusa.html.

Vice President's Task Force: Terrorism is the unlawful use or threat of violence against persons or property to further political or social objectives. It is usually intended to intimidate or coerce a government, individuals or groups, or to modify their behavior or politics.

SOURCE: Vice President's Task Force, 1986.

United Nations: A TERRORIST is any person who, acting independently of the specific recognition of a country, or as a single person, or as part of a group not recognized as an official part or division of a nation, acts to destroy or to injure civilians or destroy or damage property belonging to civilians or to governments in order to effect some political goal. TERRORISM is the act of destroying or injuring civilian lives or the act of destroying or damaging civilian or government property without the expressly chartered permission of a specific government, thus, by individuals or groups acting independently or governments on their own accord and belief, in the attempt to effect some political goal.

SOURCE: http://www.inlink.com/~civitas/mun/res9596/terror.html.

Defense Department: Terrorism is the unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence against individuals or property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious, or ideological objectives.

SOURCE: http://www.periscope.usni.com/demo/terms/t0000282.html.

Defense Intelligence Agency: Terrorism is premeditated, political violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine state agents, usually to influence an audience.
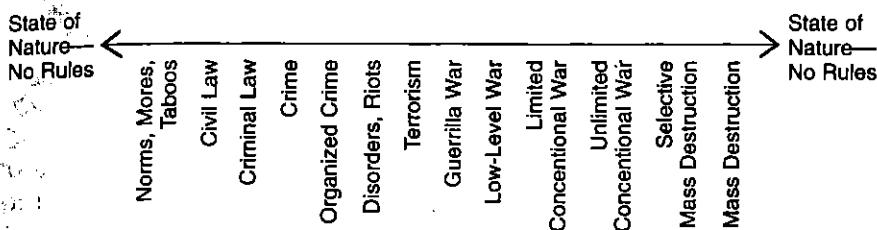
SOURCE: http://www.periscope.usni.com/demo/terms/t0000282.html.

State of Nature— No Rules													State of Nature— No Rules
←	Norms, Mores, Taboos	Civil Law	Criminal Law	Crime	Organized Crime	Disorders, Riots	Terrorism	Guerrilla War	Low-Level War	Limited Conventional War	Unlimited Conventional War	Selective Mass Destruction	Mass Destruction →

FIGURE 1.1 Spectrum of Conflict

If you accept this assumption, you will be able to understand terrorism. To illustrate this, consider a concept developed by the U.S. Army in the early 1970s. After the Vietnam War, the Army realized its mission was changing and it had to be prepared to fight any number of different styles of war. Conflict could range from low-level brushfire wars to nuclear devastation, and the meaning of war was nebulous at best. To clarify this situation, the U.S. Army spoke of a spectrum of conflict (see Figure 1.1). The spectrum was a continuum that ranged from low-intensity conflict to full-scale war. This scale probably more correctly reflects the human condition than the belief that we can either be at war or at peace. It also helps us understand terrorism.

Because humans live in a perpetual state of conflict and conflict management, civil coercive power has a place on the spectrum of conflict. Even before conflict rises to a military level, civil authorities routinely face challenges that must be met by implied or direct force. At the lowest level of organization, informal norms and mores enforce compliance, and if they fail, stronger coercive force is applied. In modern Western society, this may be civil or criminal law, whereas a more passive social group might use expulsion or shunning. Regardless, social groups always have the potential to exhibit coercive force to enforce behavior.

Terrorism is a form of violent civil disobedience, and it can be placed on a spectrum of conflict. At the most basic governmental level, the state faces low-level challenges with ordinary crime. This increases with group violence, then rioting and wider disorders, and finally terrorism. At this point, military options may be employed as the continuum moves to guerrilla war, low-level war, conventional war, technological war, wars of ecological destruction, and wars of oblivion.

Ethicists may correctly argue that we must always move to minimal conflict by using the least amount of force, but morality is not the issue here. What you should be able to see from the simple model is that terrorism is simply a form of conflict among social organizations that accept conflict as normal. There is nothing mystical about terrorism. It is simply a form of conflict between civil disorders and guerrilla warfare. If it is a form of conflict, its tactics can be modeled.

Over the past few years, I have used a typology to train military and police personnel in counterterrorism (Figure 1.2). It does not solve any definitional problems, but police and military officers have told me that it has helped them conceptualize their counterterrorist mission. This tactical typology may help you understand the issues involved in responding to terrorism.

The three parallel lines in the model symbolize three different measures that roughly correlate with each other. The first measure shows the level of activity. It is fairly simple to grasp: incidents on the low end equal low activity, whereas the high end represents increasing rates of violence. The second line represents the type of activity. The line itself indicates the size of the terrorist group. On the extreme left, directly correlated with low activity on the activity continuum, is a single individual. Size increases as you move to the right. This brings the first rule of thumb. In terrorism, the level of activity is generally correlated with the size of the group. Generally, *the larger the group, the greater its potential for terrorist violence.*

Notice that the second line is divided by a nebulous border separating criminal and political terrorism. This border is intentionally open because terrorists are free to move between the criminal and political boundaries. The openness is designed to illustrate the movement of political violence. Some criminal groups can become so large that they may act like terrorist groups. Small terrorist groups can become so focused on crime that they become nothing more than criminal gangs. Examples of these types of groups appear underneath the line.

The final continuum illustrates the type of response. Most criminal terrorism and a good share of political terrorism is a law enforcement responsibility. This means that when nonpolice units assist police agencies as part of a security force, they must think as the police do. For example, deadly force is always the last alternative in police operations. Additionally, legal procedures and an emphasis on individual rights guide each phase of a law enforcement response and investigation.

As you move across the continuum, however, response actions become more militaristic. Although deadly force remains the final option, law enforcement personnel must think of themselves as a team, much as the military does. The courts may allow certain amounts of latitude in procedures, such as internment in Northern Ireland, in the interest of public safety. Teamwork, however, does not imply an ability to operate outside legal norms. Despite the necessity to develop certain military tactics or employ the direct help of the military, extrajuridical activities cannot be tolerated. For example, police and military units of some countries have formed secret death squads, claiming terrorists have become too strong. If legal norms are violated, security forces can become little more than terrorists themselves.
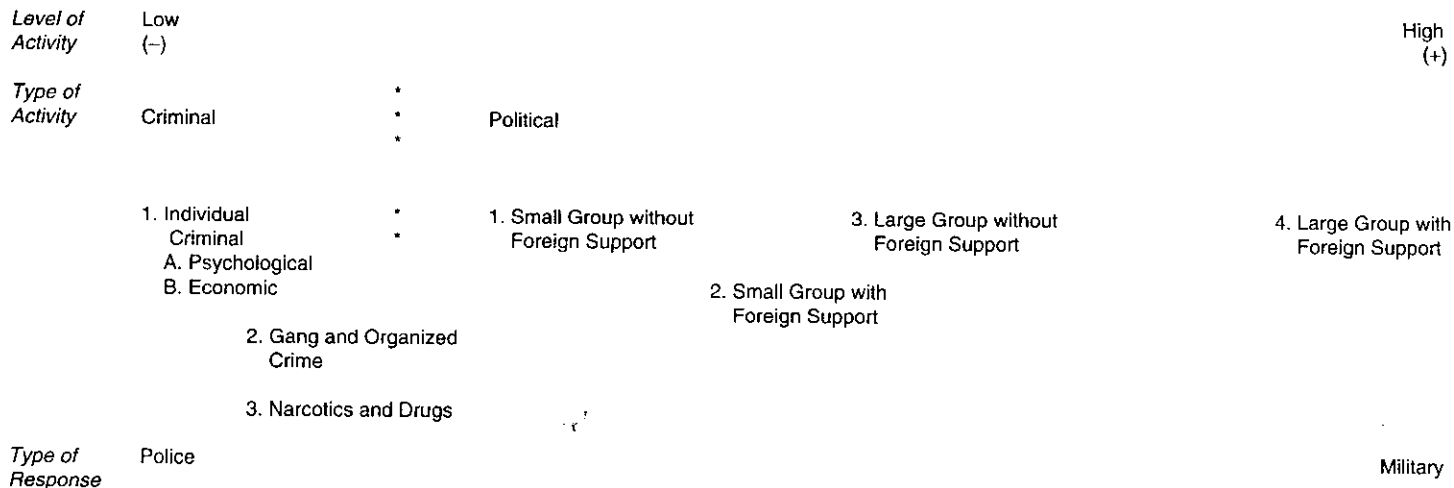
Level of Activity	Low (−)				High (+)
Type of Activity	Criminal	Political			
	1. Individual Criminal A. Psychological B. Economic	1. Small Group without Foreign Support	3. Large Group without Foreign Support		4. Large Group with Foreign Support
		2. Small Group with Foreign Support			
	2. Gang and Organized Crime				
	3. Narcotics and Drugs				
Type of Response	Police				Military

FIGURE 1.2 Tactical Typology of Terrorism

THE TACTICS OF TERRORISM

The tactical typology is simply a verbal model to help in conceptualizing the state of terrorism. Yet, the practice of terrorism is not as stable as the loosely correlated model indicates. Brian Jenkins (1985) explains why. Traditionally, Jenkins says, there are six terrorist tactics: bombing, hijacking, arson, assault, kidnapping, and taking hostages. As religious fanaticism has grown in the past few years, the arsenal of terrorism has changed to include potential threats from weapons of mass destruction (Jenkins, 1996; Brackett, 1996, p. 45; White, 1986b, 2000). Yet, even religious terrorists use traditional terrorist tactics. The only addition to Jenkins's categories can be found in the realm of technology. In the age of information and electronics, disruption of services through electronic hacking has also become a tactic of terrorism.

Technology has another impact on terrorism. Jenkins calls this influence "force multipliers" (see Box 1.3). In military terms, a force multiplier increases striking power without increasing the strength of a unit. Terrorists routinely use force multipliers because it adds to their aura. All political terrorists and some criminal terrorists want to give the illusion that they can fight on another level. They want to move to guerrilla or conventional war, although they almost never do so.

Three force multipliers give the illusion that terrorists operate on a higher level. Christine Ketcham and Harvey McGeorge (1986, pp. 25–33) identify the first force multiplier as technology. The use of technological weapons or attacks on technological targets gives the illusion of a high level of activity. James Adams's (1986) analysis of finances in terrorism illustrates the second force multiplier: transnational support. Any group with the ability to cross national borders can operate on a higher level. Another force multiplier is the media. One incident can be converted into a "campaign" as live electronic media scramble to break the latest news. A frightening new force multiplier, according to Bruce Hoffman (1995), has been the introduction of religious fanaticism in terrorist activities. This has become so important that Chapter 4 will focus exclusively on violent religious behavior. Regardless of the source, force multipliers allow small groups or individuals to operate as if they were a larger group.

GUIDE TO THE KEY CONCEPTS

1. Terrorism is defined within social and political contexts. This is the primary reason that no single definition of terrorism will ever be successful.

2. In terms of contextual definitions, the meaning of terrorism is influenced by history, conflict, political power, political repression, mass media, crime, and the specific form that terrorism takes.

3. Since the meaning of terrorism fluctuates, a simple definition is probably the best course of action.

BOX 1.3   Force Multipliers in Terrorism

Rule of thumb: The larger the group, the larger its level of activity.

Exceptions—Force Multipliers
1. Technology
2. Transnational support
3. Media
4. Religion

Technology
Weapons enhancement allows a small group to operate on a higher level. Terrorists may use technology in their attack or attack a technological target. The two newest threats are cyberterrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

Transnational Support
Groups and individuals operating with foreign support bases may have a higher level of activity.

Media
Coverage can enhance the aura of the event. Many terrorist events are "made-for-TV" dramas. Twenty-four-hour news coverage leads to sensationalist fillers.

Religion
Religious fanaticism has changed the structure of modern terrorism. Religious terrorists are not constrained by social norms because they feel they answer to a higher power.

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4. It is best to look at terrorism from a tactical standpoint, if you are focusing on security. Terrorism is simply a method of fighting. It terrorizes the public because violence is centered on places where people feel safe.

5. Tactically, terrorism has basic forms. These include: bombing, arson, hijacking, assault, kidnapping, taking hostages, and disruption of services.

6. Terrorists use force multipliers to increase their attacking power. Force multipliers include technology, transnational support, media coverage, and religious fanaticism.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Think about the last time you saw a television report on a terrorist event. What went through your mind? If the context of the event changed, would you have viewed it differently? If you had a definition of terrorism, would it have changed your view of the event? Does the event you recall fit only the tactical typology? If not, is there another system that would allow you to classify the act? What tactic did the terrorist(s) use? Did force multipliers play a role?

FURTHER READING

Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism*
Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*